

# transportation/land-use platform

In the next twenty-five years, the Bay Area is expected to add another two million people and 1.4 million new jobs to the nine-county region. Where these people live and where the jobs are located are essential in determining what the region's future will look like, including how effectively the transportation system can handle this new growth. For example, future traffic impacts on regional and interregional roadways could be lessened if new development is focused in areas already well served by public transit. People who live and work within walking distance of the region's public transit network are more apt to take advantage of this option for getting from point A to point B, and more transit riders means fewer vehicles competing for valuable road space. If schools and shops are located closer to homes and to one another, walking and bicycling also could become convenient options. Ultimately, a regional shift toward more compact growth patterns could increase livability, preserve air quality, protect the environment and open space, dampen the growth in vehicle miles traveled, and make our investments in transportation more cost-effective.



VALLEY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Difficult challenges must be acknowledged and addressed in order to achieve this vision of more compact growth and livable communities. Developing new residences and jobs near mass transit may reduce the amount of driving on regional roadways but could increase local traffic near transit stations. Loss of too many industrial spaces to new housing and commercial development in the inner Bay Area could drive goods-movement-oriented uses further out to the perimeter of the region, driving up the cost of goods and reducing job diversity options. New investments in “transit villages” could benefit local businesses but could accelerate gentrification pressures if not planned properly. And new higher-density development projects will generate opposition if projects aren’t well designed and if neighborhood groups aren’t involved from the early planning stages.

Added to these challenges is the fact that while MTC and its transportation partners plan and finance transportation infrastructure, and agencies such as the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) help coordinate other regional planning activities, land-use decisions are ultimately the province of 101 cities and

nine counties spread throughout the region.<sup>1</sup> The regional interest in more efficient land-use patterns must be achieved through a system of continued local control over land-use decisions. The bottom line is that we must better define the roles and responsibilities of all those with a stake in transportation and land-use decisions, agree on a shared vision for regional growth patterns, and pursue mutually supporting implementation strategies.

**“ THE BAY AREA MUST GROW SMARTER AND ACCOMMODATE MORE OF ITS FUTURE JOB AND POPULATION GROWTH IN EXISTING URBAN AND SUBURBAN AREAS. ”**

With the development of this Transportation/Land-Use Platform, MTC is building on its 1996 Transportation/Land-Use Policy Statement, which paved the way for the agency’s groundbreaking Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) program. First developed in 1998, the TLC program has funded over 130 community-led transportation projects that have strengthened neigh-

neighborhoods, promoted more transportation choices, and contributed to urban and suburban revitalization throughout the region. MTC's Housing Incentive Program (HIP) also has provided transportation funds to local governments as incentives for building new housing adjacent to public transit hubs. In 2002, the Bay Area's five regional agencies, including MTC and ABAG, released a new Smart Growth Vision for the region resulting from dozens of public workshops and town hall meetings in all nine counties. The conclusion: the Bay Area must grow smarter and accommodate more of its future job and population growth in existing urban and suburban areas.

In preparing for the Transportation 2030 Plan, through dozens of focus groups, public workshops and a public opinion survey, MTC found strong public support for better integration of transportation and land-use planning, the development of more convenient transportation options, and a greater level of regional cooperation on issues surrounding transportation and land use. With this institutional history, policy experience and strong public support for addressing the issue, the Commission has developed the following principles, policies and implementation strategies to further strengthen MTC's efforts to better connect transportation and land-use decisions. This Transportation/Land-Use Platform will guide the Commission's strategic investments to achieve greater transportation efficiency for people and goods, while promoting more livable communities and a better quality of life for all Bay Area residents.

## Guiding Principles

The Commission believes the following principles should guide the region's efforts to strike a better balance between transportation and land-use decisions.

### Focus Growth Around Transit

The Transportation 2030 Plan invests two-thirds of the region's transportation dollars in public transportation. The more people who live, work and study in close proximity to public transit stations and corridors, the more the region can reap the rewards of these critical investments. The areas immediately surrounding major bus, train and ferry terminals represent regionally significant opportunities to develop new housing, jobs, schools, government offices and social services. In many cases, market forces could spur this type of "transit-oriented development" if it weren't for the multitude of zoning and regulatory barriers that stand in the way. Removing these barriers and providing new incentives for transit-focused growth should be a top priority for all levels of government.

### Provide Community Benefits

If new higher-density housing, jobs and retail are built near public transit stations, there will be significant benefits for the entire Bay Area. Yet there also should be benefits to the local community beyond the transit investment itself in order to maintain livability, increase accessibility to the transit stations and reduce gentrification pressures on existing residents. These improvements have traditionally been proposed in the form of new infrastructure, but also could come in the form of parks, pedestrian safety measures, public services, streetscape projects or additional transit services. Financial measures designed to

## Platform Principles

- Focus Growth Around Transit
- Provide Community Benefits
- Reinvest in Existing Infrastructure
- Create Smarter Suburbs
- Build More Affordable Housing in the Right Places
- Avoid Displacement of Goods-Related Businesses and Facilities
- Develop Stronger Partnerships

“THE BAY AREA SUFFERS FROM A SEVERE HOUSING CRUNCH, AND THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IS BEARING THE BRUNT OF IT.”

capture the increased land values around transit stations also should be developed in order to generate funds to stabilize neighborhoods and benefit existing residents and businesses.

### Reinvest in Existing Infrastructure

The current transportation system in the Bay Area — 1,400 miles of highways, 19,600 miles of local streets and roads, and 9,860 miles of transit routes including 400 miles of rail transit — represents a significant public investment that needs continued funding for maintenance and operations. Closer coordination of transportation and land use will mean more efficient use of existing infrastructure but also increased usage and wear. Reinvestment in existing roads, rails, sewers, utilities, parks and other infrastructure is critical in order to support more compact

growth throughout the region, especially to support infill strategies in our more urbanized areas. Major intra-regional travel corridors also will require coordinated investment strategies to improve operational efficiency and reduce design deficiencies for facilities that carry a wide range of automobile and truck traffic.

### Create Smarter Suburbs

While the Regional Agencies' Smart Growth Vision focuses growth around transit stations and corridors and within existing urban centers, it recognizes that some new growth will occur at the edge of existing cities and suburbs. Whether this growth occurs as new suburbs or infill development in existing suburbs, it should incorporate a mix of uses and housing types that can make walking, bicycling and local public transit services a more convenient option for local residents. This can be accomplished through new approaches to neighborhood design, trail development and bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly streets, as well as by encouraging the placement of schools, community centers, churches, shops and services at the centers of larger suburban developments within an easy walk of surrounding homes and neighborhoods.

**“ TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES  
MUST DEVELOP CLOSER PARTNERSHIPS  
WITH CITIES, COUNTIES AND OTHERS  
WITH LAND-USE AUTHORITY. ”**



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### Build More Affordable Housing in the Right Places

The Bay Area suffers from a severe housing crunch, and the transportation system is bearing the brunt of it. Most severely affected are the routes serving the Central Valley and Sacramento regions, where many Bay Area workers now live due to a lack of housing choices in the core nine-county region. The lack of an adequate supply of housing within the region — enough to match existing and future job growth — means that the number of in-commuters to the region will nearly double by 2030 if we don't provide more housing. All levels of government must commit to increasing housing supply and affordability, in addition to ensuring that the housing is built in locations that provide a wide variety of transportation options.

### Avoid Displacement of Goods-Related Businesses and Facilities

While many new housing opportunities exist in the transformation of the region's older industrial and commercial areas, it is also important that key locations for goods-movement purposes be preserved. This is a critical land-use strategy for the

inner Bay Area that can help maintain economic vitality while reducing the growth in truck traffic. Distribution and warehousing facilities that are the most important for our regional economy must remain functional and economically viable. Regional strategies and incentive programs need to be developed that acknowledge the special needs of both urban and suburban communities that house these facilities, so that jurisdictions will be encouraged to preserve these critical supporting land uses.

### Develop Stronger Partnerships With Public Agencies, Neighboring Regions and the Private Sector

MTC cannot and should not take on the smart growth challenge alone. This Transportation/Land-Use Platform is designed to further define MTC's roles and responsibilities in order to assist in the implementation of the Regional Agencies' Smart Growth Vision. The list of partners who will be essential in implementing this platform as well as the Smart Growth Vision include ABAG, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District), the



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Bay Conservation and Development Commission, other regional planning agencies, our regional neighbors to the north, east and south, county congestion management agencies (CMAs) and public transit providers. Working more closely with the private sector, community-based organizations and members of the public who haven't traditionally been engaged in the transportation/land-use discussion is absolutely critical to the success of this effort. In the end, however, it is local governments who will ultimately make the land-use decisions, and the successful implementation of this platform requires that all transportation agencies develop even closer partnerships with cities, counties and others with land-use authority.

## Statement of Policy

The Commission believes that in order to meet the goals of the Transportation 2030 Plan and improve the quality of life for all Bay Area residents, transportation and land-use decisions must be more closely coordinated. It will thus be the policy of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to encourage, recognize and reward land-use practices and policies that maximize walking, bicycling, transit ridership and other forms of high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) travel, while diminishing the need to travel long distances and reducing vehicle-related air pollution. MTC will provide incentives and assistance to local governments to plan for and develop new jobs, housing, neighborhood-serving retail, schools and other services in well-designed urban and suburban centers, in close proximity to the region's transit stations, and along present and future transit and HOV corridors.

## Implementation

In December 2003, the Commission adopted an initial five-point Transportation/Land-Use Policy Platform that laid out the agency's commitment to pursue new plans and programs to encourage the types of local land-use decisions that would result in more cost-effective regional transportation investments. As a result of continued stakeholder input in 2004, and under the guidance of a 25-member Transportation/Land-Use Task Force that has been overseeing the development of this document, the initial five-point platform has evolved into the Statement of Policy above and the following implementation strategies.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. Prioritize transportation investments that maintain the existing core transportation network

If the region's smart growth vision is to become a reality, more compact growth patterns must be supported by a complementary investment in the rehabilitation and maintenance of existing infrastructure. MTC will reaffirm its commitment to maintaining the region's transportation network by ensuring investments in both transit and road rehabilitation projects that serve the customer directly: replacing transit vehicles, rehabilitating track and pavement, and meeting key safety and accessibility requirements for all modes of travel.

### 2. Reserve an appropriate percentage of funding from the TLC/HIP program for land-use planning efforts around existing or future transit stations and corridors

MTC will create a new land-use planning grant program to assist local governments in the development of local land-use plans

## Platform Implementation

- 1 Prioritize transportation investments that maintain the existing core transportation network
- 2 Reserve an appropriate percentage of funding from the TLC/HIP program for land-use planning efforts around existing or future transit stations and corridors
- 3 Encourage cities and counties to incorporate general plan policies that support transit-oriented development around Resolution 3434 stations
- 4 Support transportation/land-use coordination beyond major transit corridors
- 5 Coordinate transportation/land-use issues with regional neighbors
- 6 Develop joint planning projects with partner agencies to implement this platform and the Smart Growth Vision

and policies — e.g., specific plans, precise plans, model zoning ordinances, zoning overlays, form-based codes, etc. — for areas immediately surrounding bus, ferry and train stations. The land-use plans funded under this program should help increase transit ridership, prioritize station access for bicyclists and pedestrians, and involve a diversity of community stakeholders. MTC also will prioritize TLC and HIP funds for communities that plan for and build new housing, neighborhood-serving retail, employment, schools, day care centers and other services near transit stations and in town centers and downtown cores.

### 3. Encourage cities and counties to incorporate general plan policies that support transit-oriented development around Resolution 3434 stations

Any major transit investment must consider its ridership markets if it is to be economically feasible, and adjacent land uses to the transit infrastructure play an important role in determining that viability. The Commission will develop new criteria that will define supportive land use for the region's major new public transit investments outlined in MTC Resolution 3434. The goal of this policy will be to ensure that the investment of regional discretionary dollars will be matched by a local demonstration that plans are in place and will be implemented to support adequate housing and employment densities around public transit stations and corridors. The criteria will be scaled to match the type of transit investment to local land-use patterns.

### 4. Support transportation/land-use coordination beyond major transit corridors

MTC commits to working with ABAG and other regional and local government partners to help coordinate transportation and land use beyond the region's major public transportation corridors. In addition to continuing to pursue neighborhood-scale access improvements highlighted through the TLC program, the agencies will work with local governments interested in developing new approaches to suburban design that can offer a wider variety of travel options for shorter distance trips, particularly walking, bicycling, and smaller shuttle, bus and jitney services.



### 5. Coordinate transportation/land-use issues with regional neighbors

In-commuting pressures are directly tied to jobs/housing imbalances spilling over our borders. Bringing more housing into the Bay Area instead of anticipating future development in neighboring regions is a major underlying objective of the Smart Growth Vision recommendations. Building on ABAG's work with the Interregional Partnerships, MTC will seek the assistance of ABAG and the Air District in developing new partnerships with our regional neighbors to advance joint planning projects that focus on transportation/land-use issues of mutual concern.

### 6. Develop joint planning projects with partner agencies to implement this platform and the Smart Growth Vision

MTC, ABAG, the Air District and other partners will work to further the implementation of the Smart Growth Vision as well as investigate the feasibility of new joint planning efforts such as a housing and jobs location strategy and a regional open space plan that would reinforce infill development as a priority for growth in cities and established suburbs. MTC also will continue to provide financial assistance

to the county congestion management agencies (CMAs) through its Transportation Planning and Land-Use Solutions (T-PLUS) program to implement this platform, develop county-level funding for the Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) program, coordinate with public transit agencies, and pursue tailored efforts at the county level to promote more livable communities.

## Education, Legislation and Outreach

In support of its commitment to implement the Transportation/Land-Use Platform, MTC, in partnership with ABAG, the Air District and other regional and local agencies, will develop an education and outreach strategy that will focus on providing needed tools, assistance, materials and workshops for local elected officials, city staff and members of the public. MTC and ABAG also will develop a joint legislative platform in partnership with other agencies that will focus on removing barriers to smart growth, including:

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- Legislation to protect the builders of attached housing, like apartments and condominiums, from unfair litigation
- Fiscal measures to allow local governments to capture new revenues from development around transit stations and corridors
- Reform of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to reduce the barriers for transit-oriented development proposals that demonstrate community support, are consistent with local plans and do not result in significant environmental impacts
- New financial incentives from the state and federal governments to promote more housing and jobs near transit stations and corridors

## Evaluation

In order to gauge progress towards achieving closer coordination of transportation and land-use planning in the region, MTC recognizes that success must be quantified through specific performance measures. The following are examples of measures that the regional agencies will develop and report to the public:

- Number of distinct planning efforts around key transit stations and corridors
- Travel patterns of people living and working near public transit (including mode of transportation, vehicle miles traveled and air quality impacts)



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- Total number of housing units produced in the region
- Total number of housing units produced around key transit stations and corridors
- Percent of new housing and job development near transit stations and corridors
- Type of households near transit stations and corridors, including income levels, age and homeownership data
- Square footage of warehouse and industrial space in designated goods-movement districts

## Conclusion

Our region — projected to grow by at least another one million jobs and one million residents over the next two decades — will face serious consequences if we fail to alter the way we grow. Mounting traffic congestion, air quality problems and a continuing housing crisis all point to the need to craft a new regional approach to coordinating transportation and land-use decisions. This Transportation/Land-Use Platform is MTC's commitment to help address these problems, assist in the implementation of the region's Smart Growth Vision, and promote more livable communities and transportation options for all Bay Area residents.

1 In addition to land-use authority at the local government level, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) has unique land-use powers in order to protect the San Francisco Bay shoreline.

2 Implementation strategies 2 through 5 are taken directly from the Commission's five-point Transportation/ Land-Use Policy Platform adopted in December 2003.